

# Chichester District Council

Cabinet

7 July 2020

## Vision Review and support to the High Street

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

**2.1 Cabinet note the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on the 30 June on the vision reviews for Chichester, Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey and East Wittering and Bracklesham and approve that the support to the Visions continue as set out in section 5.1**

**2.2 Cabinet approve the setting up of a High Street Group led by the Cabinet Member for Property, Growth and Regeneration to support the recovery and transformation of Chichester High Street.**

**2.3 Cabinet approve that the Cabinet Member for Property, Growth and Regeneration invite representation from partner organisations and retailers as set out in section 5.1 to work on the group along with the nominated representative from the OSC Committee.**

**2.4 Cabinet approve that the support for the High Street recovery and transformation in Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey and East Wittering and Bracklesham is coordinated through the existing Vision Groups, Towns and Parish Council.**

### 3. Background

**3.1** The recovery and transformation of the High Streets is a key action within the District Councils Economic Recovery Action Plan and Economic Strategy. The Council is committed to supporting the city and local towns to help deliver improvements for residents and to make the area a better place to live, work and visit. One way of doing this is to work collaboratively with partners in the city and towns to create a Vision which sets out strategic aims and objectives which are considered to reflect the nature of those areas and an action plan which identifies

lead partners and the key actions for delivery. Visions provide an opportunity to consider the needs of residents, workers and visitors and set aims for how the areas might develop both commercially and culturally, providing opportunities for economic growth and job creation.

Visions provide an opportunity to collectively consider challenges for local areas and actions to respond to these. The authority has been working with partners in Chichester, Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey, and East Wittering and Bracklesham to support the production of a Vision and to implement the actions. Whilst not the lead organisation, for all of these Visions, the district has provided support in the form of staff resources and some funding. There are also some projects within the action plans for which CDC is the lead partner for delivery.

All of the Visions are at different stages, with some being in their initial stages of setting up the structure for delivery and actions. The resources to support each of the Visions vary between the vision groups.

Partners across the district have been contacted recently to gather feedback relating to their views on the Visions within the district and how the aims and objectives might need to change to reflect the current and emerging position with regard to Covid 19. A summary of the feedback received from partners is provided in the Appendices 2 to 6.

An evaluation of the priorities for each of the Vision area has been undertaken and paragraph 5.1 sets out a summary of the proposals for each of the areas. The Appendices to this report also set out some of the key areas of achievement for each of the Visions so far.

‘Supporting the High Street’ is one of the key objectives of the Council’s Economic Development Strategy and is a key action within the Covid recovery plan. Linked to the delivery of the Visions, the main aims are to;

- deliver targeted support programmes to retail businesses and other businesses seeking to locate in our town centres
- work with the BID and other organisations across the district to pro-actively support businesses that can contribute to a more diversified offer
- To support and develop our night-time economy offer
- To support the transformation of the high street
- engage with the Government’s High Street Task Force to utilise their emerging support
- To work with the LEP to develop ‘safer cities’

In light of the Covid19, this objective has become increasingly important; it is already well documented that the crisis has accelerated what was already a challenging landscape, with some reports suggesting changes that were predicted to take 5 years to come to fruition are now expected to be seen in 5 months.

As part of the Councils’ economic recovery considerations, it is recommended that the action plans for both the Economic Development and Inward Investment Strategies are reviewed to ensure they reflect the current position and the most pressing issues needing our resource and support over the coming year. This work will be led by the Economic Development team, who have strong links with businesses and a detailed

knowledge of the individual towns across the district.

A number of key guidance documents have been published, including the High Street 'Task Force Template for Recovery' and the Government 'Guidance for Safer Public Spaces – Urban Centres and Green Spaces'. Both contain a structure to assist Local Authorities to produce a 'roadmap' of priorities and action plans, covering the immediate forthcoming weeks and the medium term.

An 'Opening High Streets Safely' fund of £108,000 has been awarded to Chichester District against which CDC is eligible to claim expenditure on works associated with ensuring the district high streets are reopening in a safe manner in accordance with the criteria set out by the Government.

To manage and coordinate the various elements and considerations relating to the 'High Street' opening up, recovery and transformation, including the documents referenced above, an internal High Street Recovery officer group has been formed working with a number of partners including City, Town and Parish councils, WSCC, Chichester BID, CWS, and the LEP (Coast to Capital) to oversee and implement the actions required, both those with an immediate timeframe for the opening up on the 15 June and the 4 July and those taking us through the medium and longer term. Whilst a number of the areas of work are outside of the Council's statutory control, officers are well placed to take the lead where necessary, working with our partners and stakeholders to achieve a collaborative approach. A summary of the actions undertaken to date for the 'opening up' is set out at Appendix 1.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with our local retailers and feedback to date clearly shows that in the short term they are looking for help and support with social distancing in the high streets, as well as assistance in promoting the high streets as 'open for business'.

Due to the fast changing actions associated with the opening up of the High Streets, Officers will provide a verbal update on the further actions taken since this report was written and further actions planned.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

4.1 The authority must ensure that its focus on projects within the visions remain relevant and reflects the latest position within the city and towns, with resources allocated appropriately.

4.2 All Visions across the district have governance arrangements in place which provide both an overview and lead to the projects along with an opportunity to scrutinise actions in place.

4.3 The High Streets Task Force template for recovery sets out four key stages of this process (Crisis, Pre-Recovery, Recovery & Transformation) and the aim is to move through the 'recovery' period into the 'transformation' phase, which looks at partnerships, investment and delivery of vision, thereby linking with the Visions as set out in this report. It will be important to work collectively with partners and key retailers from the towns/city to ensure the profile and offer/brand of our high streets is championed and promoted.

4.4 The officers are already working with businesses about their need for support at this time and inviting their input to the High Street Recovery and transformation group will provide an opportunity for their feedback and issues to be raised, discussed and implemented if appropriate.

## 5. Proposal

5.1 It is proposed that the District Council continues to support the Visions across the district using existing resources and budget, the level of support is reflected on a place by place basis. In summary this is suggested to be as follows:

**Chichester** –Lead the delivery of the Vision with the Cabinet Member for Property, Growth and Regeneration Chairing the Vision Steering Group Revise the projects and action plan based on the feedback received from partners.

The High Street Recovery and Transformation Group, to be a sub group of the Chichester Vision to be led by the Cabinet Member for Property, Growth and Regeneration and will have the following representation on the group supported by CDC Officers:

- Chichester BID
- National Retail Representative
- Independent Retail Representative
- Hospitality/Culture/ Leisure Representative
- Chichester City Council
- WSCC
- Chichester Chamber of Commerce
- Member of OSC Committee

**Midhurst** – continue to have representation on the Midhurst Vision Steering Group; assist the group with the development of a Community Interest Company to take on the responsibilities of the Vision actions and review of the actions as a result of Covid 19.

**Petworth** – continue to be represented on the Petworth Vision Board (Cllr Alan Sutton) assist with projects through the Board subject to available resources and provide support to Petworth Town Council.

**Selsey** – Provide support to Selsey Town Council where identified in the Selsey Business Plan and complete the projects as agreed by Cabinet for the Selsey Haven project - the consideration of options for improvements to East Beach; wayfinding and support to fisheries in Selsey.

**East Wittering and Bracklesham** - Support the parish council through the production of the BREW Vision and the delivery of options to consider the improvement to the Village Centre public realm.

## 6. Alternatives Considered

6.1 Not to review the Visions and the authority continues to support the actions as previously agreed, however this would not reflect the latest positions.

6.2 The authority withdraws its support to the Visions, however this would result in potential lack of collaboration on projects and could result in duplication or missed opportunities.

## **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

7.1 The Visions are supported by officers within the Directorate for Growth and Place. This includes a proportion of the time of the Divisional Manager - Place along with the Rural Towns Co-ordinator and the Manhood Peninsula Partnership Project Officer. Other officer support from the directorate and across the authority is also provided to the relevant projects, which may be in the form of leading an action or collaborating on the delivery of the projects in place.

7.2 Officer resource from across the Council will continue to be required to support the High Street Recovery working group. Beyond the immediate 'reopening' phase, continued resource will be required to ensure a sustained recovery and to develop actions to contribute towards the 'transformation' phase as described earlier in this report. Resources will also be required from stakeholders and partner organisations to support the respective action plans.

7.3 Whilst the 'Opening High Streets Safely' fund provides a means to reclaim an initial level of expenditure, any medium or longer term actions will require further consideration of cost and available funding sources.

7.4 There is no legal requirement to provide Visions, however they are viewed as best practice to encourage partnership working and allocation of pooled resources and funding.

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 All partners involved with the Visions across the district have been contacted to request their views on the Visions. Previously consultation has taken place with the public and key stakeholders to set the priorities and action plans for the Visions.

8.2 Town and Parish Councils, as well as business associations, such as the BID have been involved with the High Street recovery actions to date and it is intended that they will continue to do so. The officers have also been working with the C2C regarding 'safer cities'. Contact has been made with high street businesses to seek their feedback on the issues they would like support with and to seek to engage with them in respect of their own proposals.

8.3 OSC have received a report on the Vision review and the High Street and have been asked to nominate a representative from OSC to sit on the High Street Recovery and Transformation Group.

## **9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

9.1 If the authority does not collaborate on partnership projects there is a risk that strategic objectives will not be delivered.

9.2 If the authority does not provide support to projects, other organisations may withdraw.

9.3 Without taking action to ensure our high streets are safe and following up to date social distancing guidelines, there is a high risk to recovery and impact on the business and retail communities in our towns and city.

9.4 As referenced earlier in the report, 'Supporting the High Street' is a key objective of the Council's Covid 19 Recovery Plan and Economic Development Strategy and this is will be an ongoing focus to consider the transformation of our high streets post-recovery; without this, there is a risk that recovery will not be sustained.

## 10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b> There are projects within the Visions which might improve the position.	X	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		X
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		X
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> There are projects within the Visions which positively impact on the Health and Wellbeing of residents.	X	
<b>Other</b> (please specify)		X

## 11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Reopening of High Streets actions summary
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Background, Progress Report and Summary of feedback from Chichester Vision partners
- 11.3 Appendix 3 - Background and Summary of feedback from Midhurst Vision partners
- 11.4 Appendix 4 - Background and Summary of feedback from Petworth Vision partners
- 11.5 Appendix 5 - Background and Summary of feedback from Selsey Vision partners
- 11.6 Appendix 6 - Background and Summary of feedback from East Wittering and Bracklesham Vision partners

## 12. Background Papers

- 12.1 Visions on web site [www.chichester.gov.uk/cityandtownvisions](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/cityandtownvisions)